

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Lawrence Stahl on 11/5/2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the Title

~~Virtual reality shopping experience~~ Method and apparatus for a user to shop online in a three dimensional virtual reality setting

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for a user to shop online in a three dimensional (3D) virtual reality (VR) setting, the method comprising:

receiving a request at a shopping server, the shopping server having a shopping cart memory, to view a virtual shopping location;

displaying the virtual shopping location on a user computer in a 3D interactive simulation view via a web browser to emulate a real-life shopping experience for the user, the virtual shopping location being streamed from the shopping server to the user computer ~~through a streaming media channel~~, wherein the virtual shopping location has a first store and a second store;

providing a virtual concierge in the virtual shopping location, the virtual concierge being linked to a concierge database which is connected to the shopping server;

receiving a request to enter into the first store of the virtual shopping location;

displaying an actual store website of the first store on the user computer in the web browser, in response to the request to enter into the first store, wherein the actual store website of the first store is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the first store, and resides on a second server;

receiving a request to insert a product from the actual store website of the first store into a virtual shopping cart;

storing the product from the actual store website of the first store in the shopping cart memory of the shopping server;

receiving a request to enter into the second store of the virtual shopping location;

displaying an actual store website of the second store on the user computer in the web browser, in response to the request to enter into the second store, wherein the actual store website of the second store is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the second store, and resides on a third server;

receiving a request to insert a product from the actual store website of the second store into the virtual shopping cart;

storing the product from the actual store website of the second store in the shopping cart memory of the shopping server;

receiving a request to purchase the products in the virtual shopping cart.

23. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for a user to shop online in a three dimensional (3D) virtual reality (VR) setting, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a request at a shopping server, the shopping server having a shopping cart memory, to view a virtual shopping location;

means for displaying the virtual shopping location on a user computer ~~through a~~ by streaming media channel in a 3D interactive simulation view via a web browser to emulate a real-life shopping experience for the user, the virtual shopping location having a first store and a second store;

means for displaying on request a virtual concierge, linked to a concierge database;

means for obtaining a request to enter into the first store of the virtual shopping location;

Art Unit: 3625

means for displaying an actual store website of the first store on the user computer in the same web browser, in response to the request to enter into the first store, wherein the actual store website of the first store is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the first store, and resides on a second server;

means for receiving a request to insert a product from the actual store website of the first store into a virtual shopping cart;

means for storing the product from the actual store website of the first store in the shopping cart memory of the shopping server;

means for obtaining a request to enter into the second store of the virtual shopping location;

means for displaying an actual store website of the second store on the user computer in the same web browser, in response to the request to enter into the second store, wherein the actual store website of the second store is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the second store, and resides on a third server;

means for receiving a request to insert a product from the actual store website of the second store into the virtual shopping cart;

means for storing the product from the actual store website of the second store in the shopping cart memory of the shopping server;

means for receiving a request to purchase the products in the virtual shopping cart.

Art Unit: 3625

45. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for a user to shop online in a three dimensional (3D) virtual reality (VR) setting, the apparatus comprising:

a shopping server having a shopping cart memory;

a virtual shopping location displayer coupled to the shopping server to display a virtual shopping location on a user computer ~~through a~~ by streaming media channel in a 3D interactive simulation view via a web browser to emulate a real-life shopping experience for the user, the virtual shopping location having a first store and a second store;

a virtual concierge, linked to a concierge database;

a store requester coupled to the shopping server, the store requester to request to enter into the first store or the second store of the virtual shopping location;

a website displayer coupled to the store requester, the website displayer to display an actual store website of the first store and an actual store website of the second store, respectively, on the user computer in the same web browser, in response to the request to enter into the first store or the second store, wherein the actual store website of the first store and the actual store website of the second store each is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the respective store, and reside on separate respective servers;

a product inserter coupled to the website displayer to insert a product from the actual store website of the first store and a product from the actual store website of the second store into a virtual shopping cart by storing the products in the shopping cart memory; and

a purchase requester coupled to the shopping server to receive a request to purchase the products in the virtual shopping cart, wherein the products are from different stores.

60. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for a user to shop online in a three dimensional (3D) virtual reality (VR) setting, said method comprising:

receiving a request at a shopping server, the shopping server having a shopping cart memory, to view a virtual shopping location;

displaying the virtual shopping location on a user computer ~~through a~~ by streaming ~~media channel~~ in a 3D interactive simulation view via a web browser to emulate a real-life shopping experience for the user, the virtual shopping location having a first store and a second store;

displaying on request a virtual concierge, linked to a concierge database;
obtaining a request to enter into the first store of the virtual shopping location;

displaying an actual store website of the first store on the user computer in the same web browser, in response to the request to enter into the first store, wherein the actual store website of the first store is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the first store, and resides on a second server;

receiving a request to insert a product from the actual store website of the first store into a virtual shopping cart;

Art Unit: 3625

storing the product from the actual store website of the first store in the shopping cart memory of the shopping server;

obtaining a request to enter into the second store of the virtual shopping location; displaying an actual store website of the second store on the user computer in the same web browser, in response to the request to enter into the second store, wherein the actual store website of the second store is linked to the virtual shopping location, is independently managed by the second store, and resides on a third server;

receiving a request to insert a product from the actual store website of the second store into the virtual shopping cart;

storing the product from the actual store website of the second store in the shopping cart memory of the shopping server;

receiving a request to purchase the products in the virtual shopping cart.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The present invention is directed towards a method and apparatus for a user to shop online in a three dimensional virtual reality setting. Independent claims 1, 23, 45, and 60 each teach the novel features of streaming a display of a virtual shopping location to a user computer, wherein the virtual shopping location includes a virtual concierge displayed to the user, and at least two virtual stores, wherein when the user requests to enter a virtual store in the virtual shopping location, an independently managed actual store website of the virtual store is displayed to the user in the same browser that displays the virtual shopping location. Further, the actual store websites are linked to the virtual shopping location.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Art Unit: 3625

The following reference has been identified as the most relevant prior art to the claimed invention(s). The prior art generally relates to virtual malls. Sandus et al. (US 2002/0072993 A1) discloses a Method and system of an integrated business topography and virtual 3D network portal. Sandus et al. does not anticipate nor render obvious streaming a display of a virtual shopping location to a user computer, wherein the virtual shopping location includes a virtual concierge displayed to the user, and at least two virtual stores, wherein when the user requests to enter a virtual store in the virtual shopping location, an independently managed actual store website of the virtual store is displayed to the user in the same browser that displays the virtual shopping location. Further, the actual store websites are linked to the virtual shopping location.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

"Desktop Discount Shopping" by David Leonhardt, PTO-892 Reference U

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL MISIASZEK whose telephone number is (571)272-6961. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM, Monday through Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on (571) 272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3625

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jeffrey A. Smith/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
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Michael A. Misiaszek
Patent Examiner
11/9/2009